

The Runestone: Voice of the Asatru Folk Assembly





Þórshof

Second Hof of the Asatru Folk Assembly

www.thorshof.com

February 2024

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Words from the Alsherjargothi



2024 is the 30th year of our Asatru Folk Assembly and we are off to a great start! It's great to see the year start with so many gatherings and so many smiling faces. We have a big year ahead of us and much to accomplish. I want to start out by bringing your attention to a few things in case you are not already aware or engaged.

Victory Never Sleeps is live at 6 Pacific every week on YouTube. Currently Witan Svan Herul and I are in the midst of a verse-by-verse lore study of the Hávamál. We

encourage questions from anyone about anything people want to know more on. These shows are also available on Spotify as podcasts every Friday.

Also, Folkbuilder Lydia Phelps in revamping our websites to make them beautiful and loaded with functionality. Stop by and check them out if you haven't already:

www.odinshof.org | www.thorshof.com | www.njordshof.org

The Baldrshof District site and the Runestone website are under construction as we speak.

Also, there is still time to register and make plans to attend Charming of the Plow at Njörðshof in White Springs Florida, I look forward to seeing you all there.



Matthew D. Flavel
Alsherjargothi, Asatru Folk Assembly
mattflavel@runestone.org

Words from our Witan

Reject the Black Pill



We exist in a world of ruin. The whole system is aligned against you. Your very existence is under threat. Triple parentheses and all that. It's over, we are done. We can't win. Our children are to be sacrificed to the monster that has consumed us.

If this is the language of "influencers" you watch, read, pay, subscribe to, I have one word for you. Stop. That's my advice. Stop.

We may view this age through a fearful lens, we may view it as something to lament. I choose to view it as opportunity. This whole world is rotten to its core. We are indeed in the Wolf Age. The Age of Iron. All of this is true.

I often hear people say, "You all just live in a bubble." Well, yeah....i suppose we do. Because we aren't looking fearfully at the ruin of modernity. What we are doing is planting the seeds for a golden age. Politics, people chopping off their reproductive organs, the public school system.... All of this madness might as well be happening in another time, another place. Because inside this "bubble" we are thriving. Couples come into being, children are being born, we have our own homeschooling curriculum, along with 4 Temples dedicated to our Gods. We have 70 acres of raw land dedicated to Tyr. One day some of us will live there, it'll be the ecclesiastical center of Asatru. While the world is tearing down statues of heroes, we're erecting statues of heroes.

This is what we are doing to prepare for “the end.”

In fact, we aren't preparing for the end, no.... We are preparing for the beginning. The beginning of a new world. The beginning of the Golden Age. We're on the ground floor of this, this beautiful existence. A world that celebrates beauty, strength, that celebrates traditions reaching back to the dawn of our people. We are gathering every week across the country, and in others. We have responded to the beacon of light, by lighting our own! We are lighting a signal fire within that never goes out.

It's easy to get sucked in by doom porn, “influencers” on whatever platform they spew their fear-based stream of madness. One thing that I'll challenge them all on ... they want to “wake people up.” Well, what happens after this awakening? Not one of these influencers has an answer for that.

That is why I came home to the Asatru Folk Assembly. We are DOING THINGS. Rather than waiting for something to happen. Come, join me in this age of victory. Be in the same bubble with us. Grow, be strong, be confident, be normal.

If you are reading this, and you haven't joined AFA, I ask you why not? When will be a good time? If not you, then who? Be a part of the solution rather than standing on the sidelines. We have Folkbuilders waiting for your application. We have Clergy, ready to answer your questions. Across Midgard we are shouting into the sky, Hailing our Gods. Be one of many voices in that circle.

Go to www.runestone.org, click on the Join link. Be a part of something special. Now that you are “awakened”, what will you do?

I know what you should do.

Hail The Gods!

Hail the Folk!

Hail! Hail the Asatru Folk Assembly!

Witan Daniel Young

dyoung@runestone.org



Words from our Gothar

Ancient Europeans before the Viking Age



Our ancient traditions are many times older than the Viking Age. There is certainly a cultural continuity back to at least the Bronze Age, and most likely to our hunter-gatherers of the Eurasian Steppe or the "Great Steppe", a vast eco-region of temperate grasslands and shrubs. Our far-fairing people came from the Taiga, or boreal forests, which is an area characterized by coniferous trees. It spans from Karelia to the Pacific, from Alaska to Labrador Canada and from parts of the northern U.S. to Estonia, Sweden, Norway, and to the Scottish Highlands.

Our Folk built the first large structures, longhouses, 7,000 years ago, and Kurgan, or better known as burial mounds, found also in western Europe.

Our Folk have a culture that predates the Middle East. Our stories are not recorded with hieroglyphs or cuneiform writing but are found now through the sciences of DNA and archeology.

Our culture/religion is ancient. We have been challenged before. Be it climate upheavals, tyrants, or fools, we are resilient! Let us be like the pine tree of the Taiga, strong, be of rough bark.

I'm all of Rough Bark, a poem by Ivan Kharabarov

I'm all of rough bark
I'm all of pine branch.

I have come
to spread over this land,
to preserve it from sickness and ailment.

I have come from the Taiga,
my hands are heavy and dark,
my roots are tough, my branches resilient.
and to a stranger's eyes,
my tears
are scalding and hot,

On my pine resin shoulders
black sables drowse.

I shall bring Spring time
to these sparse
and stunted forests;

I shall bring back coolness'
to these
warm , turbid rivers.

I shall do no harm,
I am merely
a green tree,
do not cut me down,
love me instead.



Gothi Thorgrun Odden
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Fate



When we talk about Wyrd, or fate, often ideas of karma, or maybe an old Vikings movie or even a Greek mythology movie might be conjured up. But how many of us

really understand this concept? Fate is an interesting conundrum. For Americans, we are taught from a young age things like manifest destiny, and it was our fate to conquer from coast to coast, to be world leader, etc. yet we are also taught the ever popular "no fate but what we make." So, what is it? Are we driven inexorably towards a pre-ordained destination? Or do we forge our own path and destination? The answer is complex.

Many people are drawn to think of Wyrð as karma. Perhaps the Aryan concept of karma is easily digestible because it has been so mainstream and popular. But Wyrð is much more complex than pop Hinduism, karma itself is a much deeper concept than mainstream popular culture would have you believe. But let's dive into Wyrð. Wyrð as we know is a web of cause and effect. Fate drives us, not because an outcome was decided at birth and no matter what, that is the destination. Fate is, what must be, what should be, and what could be. All of our decisions paint the picture that is our lives, all lead to a direction. We can change that direction, by good decisions and bad ones. Some may be tempted to excuse bad behavior, bad action, by "well, that's fate baby. I don't have a choice in it." This is pure folly. Fate lights a path for us to lead to the correct destination, it is up to us to see the light and take the path. We can struggle and fight and go down a different path. That is free will. But ultimately, recognizing the Tru lit path, will make our lives more full, more rich, and more authentic to our purpose.

Many struggles and seemingly devastating occurrences in my own life, that felt terrible at the time, have led me down the correct path. Every heartache, every struggle, has led me to where I am today.

What does this mean in practical application? Well, the struggles we face, the hardship, the heartache, the pain, we lament at the time, but often steer us in the direction we are meant to go. So, when you struggle, when something happens that seems devastating, try to remember this is happening for a reason, trust in fate. Following the path that fate has lit up for me has caused temporary struggle but has always steered me in a direction that ultimately was much better and made me happier.

Trust in fate, the Nornir know what they are doing. Follow that lit path and love every minute in Miðgarð.

Gothi Rob Stamm

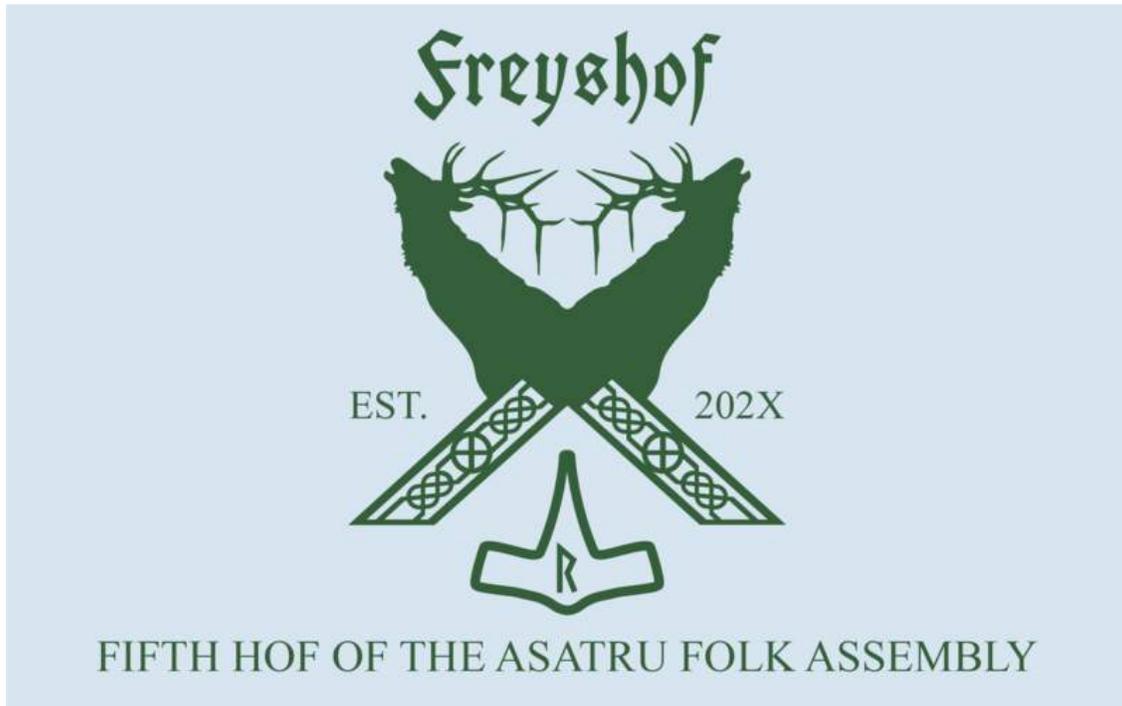
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The Quest for Freyshof

“Njördr in Nóatún begot afterward two children: the son was called Freyr, and the daughter Freyja; they were fair of face and mighty. Freyr is the most renowned of the Æsir; he rules over the rain and the shining of the sun, and therewithal the fruit of the earth; and it is good to call on him for fruitful seasons and peace. He governs also the prosperity of men.”

– Gylfaginning



[Freyshof Fund – Asatru Folk Assembly \(runestone.org\)](https://runestone.org)

This sacred quest has had a great start so far! The generosity has been amazing, as always!

This is the list of things that need to happen before we can make Freyshof a reality:

1. We need to pay off Njörðshof.
 - o The first of 2 loans have been paid off!
 - o We now owe \$98,651.87 on our remaining loan.
2. We need to raise our monthly donation average by 15.3%.
 - o This is membership dues/Hoftollar plus other donations.
3. We need to locate a suitable property.
4. We need to find lenders and build a war chest.

This is not a "quick" process so stay patient and resolute. As we progress, I will keep you all updated on our progress! Hail Freyr!



Matthew D. Flavel
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Sigrheim: Home of Victory

In Thanks for the McNallen Statues



Gythia Sheila McNallen
sheila@runestone.org

Þorrablót at Sigrheim



January was an awesome month around these parts, as we had some far-travelling guests come up for Þorrablót. Thank you so much to Mike and Emily Cosgrove for making the long drive up from Florida to weather the cold with us! We had a wonderful time, filled with good food, a somewhat warm fire, great conversations, and a solid Blót to Þorr that was accompanied by hammer-blessings and a special rune set blessing.

We can't wait for the next evens coming up. Check out the flyers below and keep your eyes on the calendar over at Thorshof.com for all the latest scheduling at Sigrheim and the surround Central Tennessee area!

Support the Home of Victory



Help Sigrheim get stocked
and ready for our Folk!

Donate Supplies
from our
wishlist ✨
amazon

Thank You!

CLICK HERE

Upcoming Events



Charming of the Plow at Sigrheim

Saturday, February ~~17th~~ ^{10th}



RSVP w/
Folkbuilder
Nick Rice
via nrice@runestone.net

Ostara at Sigrheim March 16th



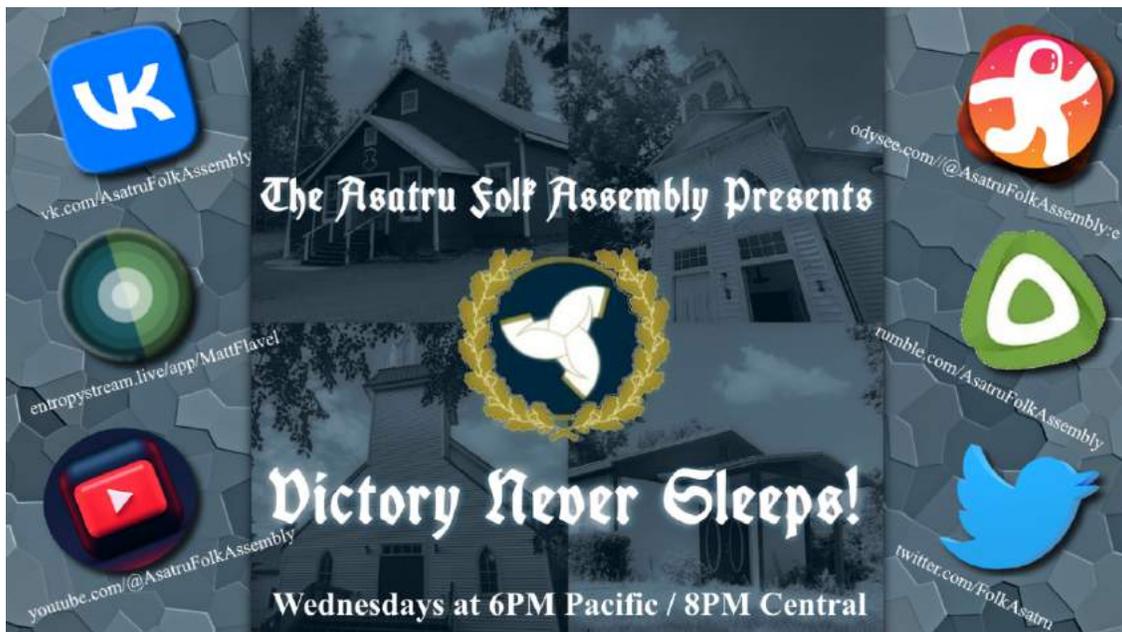
RSVP to nrice@runestone.org



Folkbuilder Nicholas Rice

nrice@runestone.org

Victory Never Sleeps



Victory Never Sleeps, a weekly podcast produced by the Asatru Folk Assembly, hosted by Alsherjargothi Matthew Flavel alongside weekly guests. The show doesn't stop until the questions stop rolling in. Come listen and learn about a variety of topics and truths relevant to our modern Asatru Folk.

Aesir. Virtues. Heroes. Doctrine. Beliefs. Cosmology. Runes. Holidays. Literature. Lore.

Help [support](#) the stream and keep the cameras rolling!

Catch us LIVE with new episodes on Wednesdays at 8pm Central / 6pm Pacific on YouTube, Twitter, Entropy, Odyssee, VK, Rumble, and Twitch. Audio versions drop on Spotify the Friday after the new episodes air.

Check out the full playlist with 100's of hours of previous recordings on our [YouTube](#).



Matthew D. Flavel
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AFA Asatru Academy

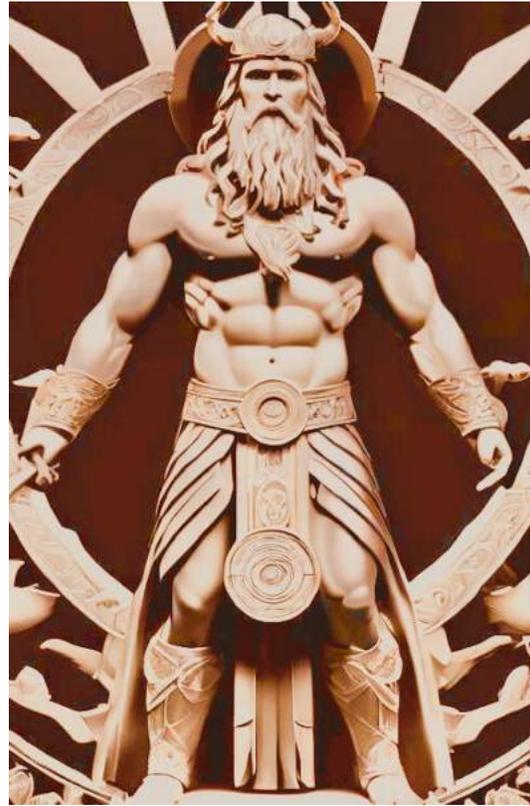


Check out the Asatru Academy at AsatruAcademy.org

Baldr & Nanna

Baldr is the son of Odin and Frigga. He is the favorite among the Gods and the most beautiful. Baldr shines with not only beauty of appearance but also of character. His death was foretold and will bring about Ragnarok. After the final battle and the Gods have died, he will emerge from Helheim and help start the cycle of life again. His life and death remind us that even in the darkest hour the light will return.

Nanna is Baldr's wife and mother of Foresetti. She is considered by some to be the Goddess of devotional love. She has unwavering love and loyalty to Baldr joining him in life, death, and rebirth. When he is killed, she dies of a broken heart and is placed on his funeral pyre.



Greetings Families,

We truly hope you are enjoying the Winter in your part of the world. The Academy has been busy with preparing new curriculum for the next school year. We are truly hoping to be able to add 4th-6th grade, and maybe even a preschool program, to our current K-3rd grade as soon as we can. Amazing things are in the works.

For our current K-3rd graders, we have revamped our Parent/Student meetings. Now taking place twice a month. One will include a storyteller for the children and the other a lesson from the curriculum taught by one of our awesome staff! Watch the parent group on MeWe and your emails for updates.

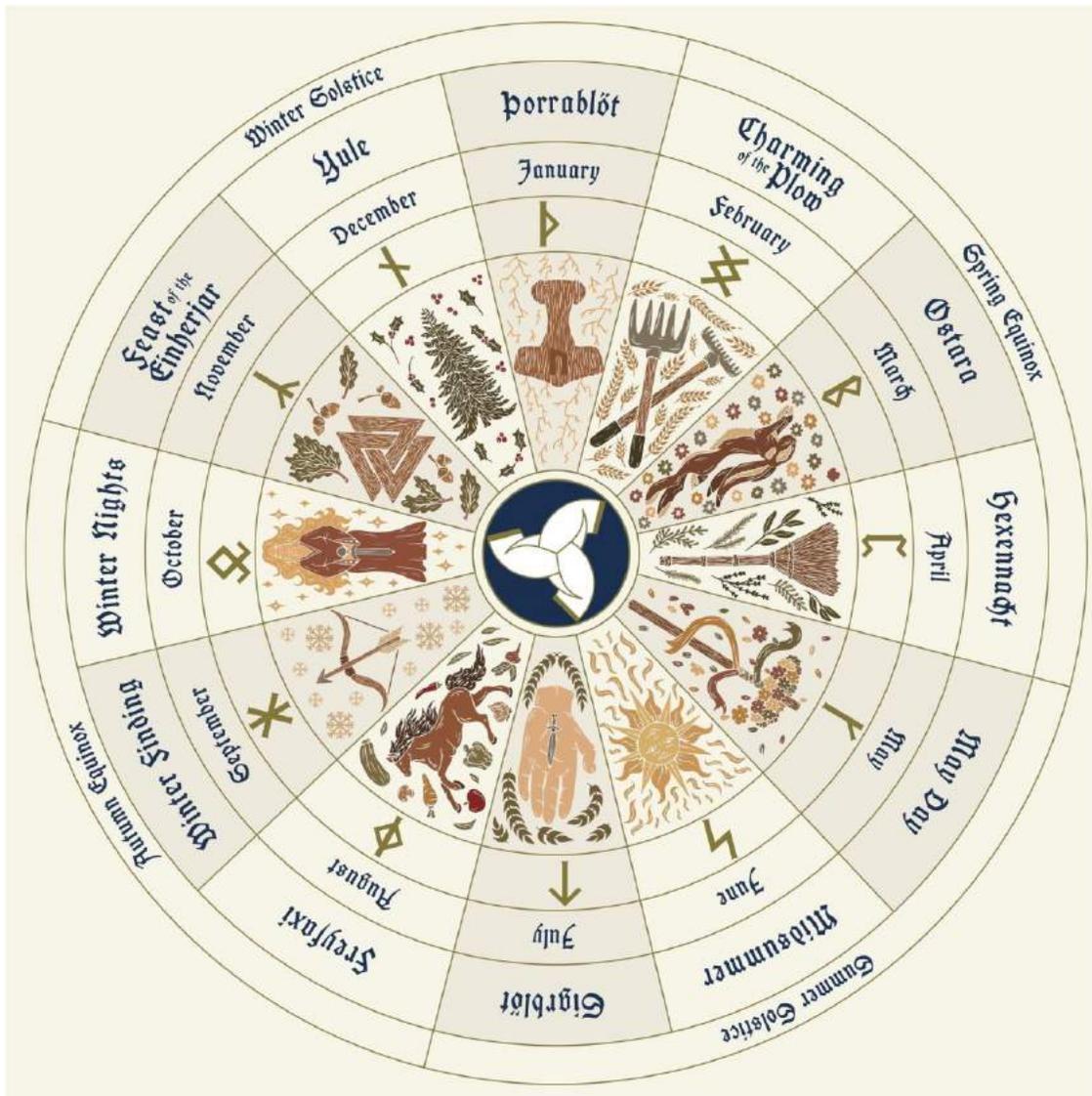
For parents of current students, our doors are always open for you. If you have any questions about the lessons or tech issues, please reach out to any member of the staff or use the chat in the MeWe Academy Parent Group. Also, please share with us what your children are working on. Anything from math assignments, science projects, writing, or drawing, post them in the group or email them to us. We want to be able to show how our students are doing.

As always, if you are interested in finding out more about our Academy program, you can reach out to us at school@runestone.org. -



Folkbuilder Sara Ault
Asst. Dean of Admissions
sault@runestone.org

Remembrance & Holy Days



[Calendar – Asatru Folk Assembly \(runestone.org\)](https://runestone.org)

2024

Date	Observance
January 9	Day of Remembrance for Raud the Strong
January 20	Þorrablót
February 9	Day of Remembrance for Eyvind Kinnrifi
February 17	Charming of the Plow
March 9	Day of Remembrance for Olvir of Egg
March 19 (observed on 16th)	Ostara
April 9	Day of Remembrance for Jarl Haakon
April 10	Day of Remembrance for John Yeowell "Stubba"
April 30 (observed on 20th)	Hexennacht
May 9	Day of Remembrance for Else Christensen
May 1 (observed on 18th)	May Day
June 9	Day of Remembrance for King Athanaric of the Goths
June 20 (observed on 15th)	Midsummer
July 4	Day of Remembrance for Sveinbjorn Beinteinsson
July 9	Day of Remembrance for Alexander Rud Mills
July 20	Sigrblót
August 9	Day of Remembrance for King Radbod of Frisia
August 17	Freyfaxi
September 9	Day of Remembrance for Prince Hermann of the Cherusci
September 22 (observed on 21st)	Winter Finding
October 1	Day of Remembrance for John Gibbs-Bailey "Hoskuld"
October 9	Day of Remembrance for Meister Guido von List
October 15	Birthday of Founder Stephen McNallen
October 19	Winter Nights
November 9	Day of Remembrance for Queen Sigríð of Sweden
November 11 (observed on 16th)	Feast of the Einherjar
December 9	Day of Remembrance for Egill Skallagrímsson
December 20	Mother's Night

Date	Observance
December 20-31 (observed on 21st)	Yuletide

February



Asatru Holidays - February 2024 - Eyvind Kinnrifi | Charming of the Plow

Day of Remembrance

Eyvind Kinnrifi | February 9th



Near to what could be considered the beginning of the Christian conversion of Norway, under King Olaf Tryggvason, there was a farmer of Noble stock who stood against the king and his attempts at conversion.

Eyvind (Pronounced Ivin) Kinnrifi was called to make plans against the upcoming invasion by his friend Harek of Thjotta, who had very recently returned home after himself refusing conversion to Christianity. Eyvind answered the call, and for the sake of haste, he traveled with only a small retinue of men. He was well welcomed by Harek, but shortly after his arrival Eyvind was ambushed.

Unbeknownst to Harek, he had been followed by some of Olaf Tryggvason's men. They forced Eyvind to Thronhjelm, where Olaf attempted to convert Eyvind, first with offers of land and gold, and then with threats of torture and death. Unwilling to turn him back on his faith, Eyvind was eventually killed.

So, what can we learn from this story?

On the 9th of February, as we stop to remember Eyvind Kinnrifi and his unwavering faith despite the consequences, take a moment to consider what in your own life is important to you. Have there ever been times in which you had to choose between keeping your faith and losing something else? A Job? A friend? Family?

Even in these times, when we are living with unparalleled freedom of choice, it can be difficult to choose faith over all else. It is sometimes easier to hide behind the idea of a pseudonym or to keep your faith hidden from those in our lives that should matter.

Remember, when you think of Eyvind, what truly matters. Stand strong with and take pride in your Folk.

Hail, Eyvind Kinnrifi!



Gythia Catie Erickson

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Holiday

Charming of the Plow | February 17th



Charming of the Plow is a ritual that takes place at the early beginning of the planting season. As the name implies the plow, or other tools used, are blessed and offerings are made to the Gods for a productive growing season. Traditionally, after blessing the plow, a ceremonial furrow was dug and then filled with cakes and other offerings. For our ancestors, this was a crucial time of year. Poor preparation often led to a poor harvest and a poor harvest led to starvation.

Asatru is the modern celebration of our ancestral heritage. Charming of the Plow symbolizes our willful penetration of the unyielding soil. It is with our own industriousness, our own will, that we create, that we change, that we provide. In the Asatru Folk Assembly, we often celebrate the Charming of the Plow by planting a tree.

Inflict your will on your world. As Asatruar, this is a time to “charm” the implements of your own productivity. Entreating the divine to bless your tools and your plans for the year is essential to starting things off right. Inviting the divine into our plans and intentions is a great way of making us aware of the sacrality that should be a part of all you do. The AFA encourages all Asatruar to be industrious in all that we do. Dream grand dreams. Make solid plans. DO big things. And after hard work, reap a bountiful harvest.

And what can you do to celebrate Charming of the Plow? Though most of us do not rely on growing our own food to survive, now is a good time to consider starting a small garden, or even just growing some herbs on the patio. Make a plan. Choose a small patch of yard and map out your garden beds. Bless the shovels and spades. Dig up the soil and begin fertilizing it with eggshells and coffee grinds. Prepare. If you cannot plant a small garden begin planning some project. Sew a quilt, built a chair, take an idea and make a plan, and then put that plan into action.

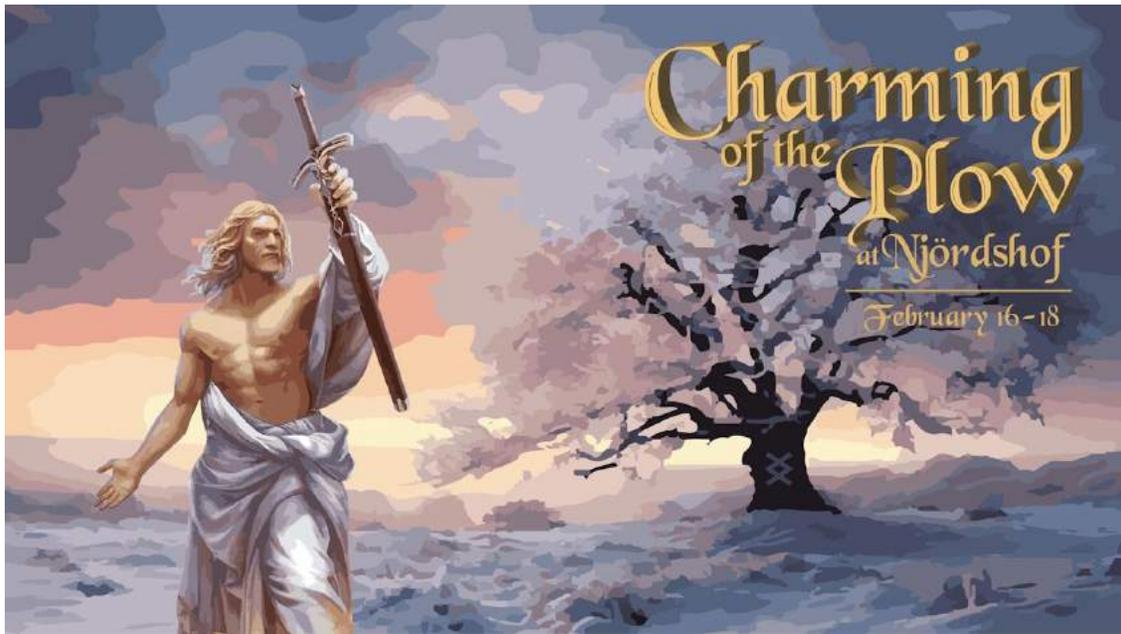
Inflict your will on your world.



Gythia Catie Erickson
cm.erickson@runestone.org

Upcoming National Event

Charming of the Plow at Njörðshof | February 16th-18th



As we continue our journey through 2024, as well as the AFA's 30th year, I urge you all to take stock of both your victories and defeats.

Many of you may have done this during Yule, or at the start of January, but I find it useful to do it once more right after Þorrablót, right before we begin planting seeds at Charming of the Plow.

Yule is the darkest time of year, where we draw inward and share in each other's company to make it through the long discontent. When January comes around, we celebrate with Asa-Þórr and rejoice in the fact that we made it through another winter.

For Charming of the Plow, we count our blessings and acknowledge our shortcomings over the previous year. We come together to make the choice to not rest on the laurels from previous victories, and to make the choice to not be buried under any mistakes we made. It's also a great time to take a look at our trajectory for the current year and make decisions on what we can do to keep or improve that trajectory.

Please join us at Njörðshof and celebrate this powerful holy tide with your Folk!

Get your tickets [HERE](#)

Gothi Trent East

teast@runestone.org



Ostara at Þorshof | March 22nd - 24th



It's that time again! Pretty soon, the grass in Dixie will awaken from its slumber, bees will be buzzing, flowers will begin to bud again. Our national event at Þorshof, Ostara. Folks are coming from all over the country to celebrate the Dawn, the Spring. Ostara has been among my favorite events since I joined AFA in 2018. Join us to worship, to fellowship, to give birth to the community and to the Gods and Folk.

We will have VIPs such as Alsherjargothi Matthew Flavel, and the AFA Witan, along with Gothar from all over the country! Expect Blót, Sumbl, games, and talks on various Asatru subjects.

Ostara at Þórshof



Ostara at Þórshof, an Asatru Folk Assembly national event, is scheduled for March 22 - 24 at our very own Þórshof in Linden, North Carolina! [Click here for Tickets](#)

Registration is already underway, please make sure to include children's tickets (even though they are free) so we can have an accurate headcount to plan meals.

Also, if you have items for our auction, whether it's handmade Asatru items, or homemade jam, whatever you wish to donate, it's greatly appreciated.

Contact your local Folkbuilder for details.

Get your tickets [HERE](#)



Witan Daniel Young
dyoung@runestone.org

Gothar Spotlight

Svan Herul, Witan, Virginia



Ordained March 14, 2020

Mentored by Alsherjargothi Matthew Flavel

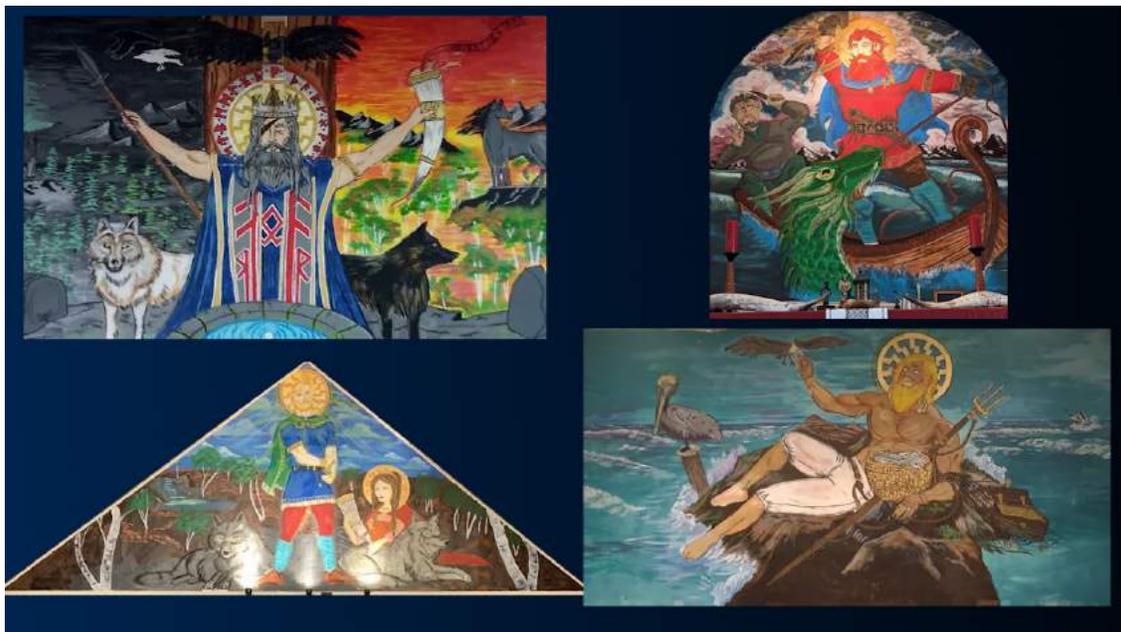
Svan is a native-born Icelander whose family immigrated to the US when he was 5 years old. Svan found his way to his ancestral faith in 1994 when he was a young teenager.

He joined the Asatru Folk Assembly in 2016. During that time, he founded Irongard Kindred, and began apprentice Folkbuilding. He brought with him a pious spirit, his knowledge of the Runes, and of our Sacred Lore that he continues to share with our priesthood and our Folk.

In 2019 and 2020 Svan was absolutely critical to the founding of Þórshof in North Carolina. I was present for much of the process. I can remember being there when he took his Gothar Ordination at Ostara in the South 2020. So impressed with his presentation and his overall presence, I decided to put my name in the hat for the Gothar Program.



Beginning in 2020, Svan began the pious task of painting murals for each of our Hofs, starting with Borr in NC, for which I personally was present. He would go on to reverently put together all of our Hof murals.



Later in 2021 at Midsummer, Gothi Herul was appointed to the AFA Witan, a counsel of Gothar that advise the Alsherjargothi and disseminate his policies to the Gothar and Folkbuilders.



I was accepted to the Gothar Program the year Svan was ordained, alongside Trent East, Rob Stamm, Brandy Callahan, Clifford Erickson and others. Myself, Trent, and Rob fell under Svan's influence and his tutelage for much of the journey to being ordained. All of us have been influenced to a degree by Svan and his wisdom, but the 3 of us, myself, Trent, and Rob were directly impacted by him.

Much of the success we have experienced at Þórshof is directly the result of his hard work, and the dedication of Svan and his family. We each owe him a debt of gratitude for that hard work and piety.

In May of 2022, my wife Heather and I renewed our vows to commemorate our 25th wedding anniversary, and we could think of no one we'd rather preside than Witan Herul.



If I could build a Gothi, Svan would be the model for what that Gothi would be. Witan Svan is a close friend. He's one of the most influential and respected of our Gothar. I'm glad he's my friend, my mentor and my priest.

Hail Witan Svan!



Witan Daniel Young
dyoung@runestone.org

Folkbuilder Spotlight

Sara Ault, Folkbuilder, Wisconsin



Folkbuilder Sara Ault is one of our most instrumental women in the AFA. Most likely are unaware of just how much she does for our Folk. Nearly every one of us has crossed paths with Sara whether we know it or not. A lot of us unknowingly reap the work Sara puts in daily and may never know just how much. Sara has her hands on so many aspects of AFA functionality that a lot of our Victories would not be what they are without her. She is directly involved in with the Asatru Academy, Runestone Press, Social Media, Websites, Lore Study, and Women's Book Study just to list a few. Her daily sacrifice of time and energy for the Folk is beyond what most do in a month, or

even a year. Sara Ault directly impacts every one of us in one form or another.

Sara was amongst the first volunteers for the AFA Academy and is still there putting the work in where others have fallen off. She is always eager to help in any way she can and has taken on more and more of the responsibilities that are needed for our children and our Church to be successful. Sara is the first point of contact for interested parents in the Asatru Academy and knows the program inside and out, she interacts regularly with parents, and contributes personally to the academic and spiritual material.

If you have children in the Academy, read the Runestone, join in lore, or book study, etc. you know the work Sara puts in. If you do not know her personally, she would be happy to make your acquaintance. If you do know her, you know just how much of a positive impact she has for our folk. Either way, reach out to her and thank her for all she does. She is humble, wise, and caring. Sara is one of our most dedicated leaders of our Church.

Thank you, Sara, for all that you do, it does not go unnoticed.

“As our Goddesses have their handmaidens, Sara Ault is our safety net for AFA leadership. Whether it’s Asatru Academy, the needs of Hof Districts, assisting with teams meetings, or various book studies; she communicates clearly, swiftly, and quietly. She is always behind the scenes with her magic touch for management. Meanwhile, her nature is calm and caring so all who know her feel they are with family” – Gythia
Sheila McNallen

“Sara is the first to help in all her areas of contribution. She is a solid force for the AFA, and Baldrshof District” – Folkbuilder Nick Rice

“Sara has been absolutely instrumental in the success of the AFA Academy; we are proud lucky to have her as the assistant dean” - Gothi Rob Stamm



Gothi Nathan Erlandson
nerlandson@runestone.org

A Thank You to Folk Services



I'm writing to give my heartfelt thanks and to let other AFA members know what a blessing our Folk Services are for our Folk. On January 4th, I was heading out with my children and our new puppy to pick up some extra work via Door Dash, something we had done many times before. We stopped for gas, and within a mile or two of the gas station, a large deer ran out from the opposite side of the road. The deer made it between two cars before impacting mine, giving me zero time to react. I was left completely caught off guard facing a hefty deductible if repairs were possible, rental car costs...etc. My Folk kindly set up a Folk Services fundraiser on my behalf, what a blessing it has been for my family. The money raised helped pay for my many accrued expenses during this unexpected hardship and taken some weight off my shoulders. We

in Asatru Folk Assembly are blessed to have such services available to our Folk. It has been immensely uplifting to feel the love and support of my Folk in my time of need.

Hard situations in life can happen to anyone of us at any time and none of us are exempt from hardship. With the support from our Folk, we are able to overcome and prevail when situations beyond our control present themselves. I'd like to thank the Asatru Folk Assembly and all my Folk who donated.

With sincerest regards,



Danielle Risso
Apprentice Folkbuilder
drisso@runestone.org

Be a Doer



We need you to volunteer for the AFA!

Yes, you. We have work to do and need folk who are artists, editors, writers, accountants, lawyers, publicists, reputation managers, professionals of all manner, technical support, web developers, system admins, tradesmen, craftswomen, and more. See the list of amazing projects we have below. We will find a way for you to help our Folk.

Please email volunteer@runestone.org to help us make a difference in our world.

Baby Blanket Project

The Women of the AFA are proud to be continuing this fine and noble work we call the Baby Blanket Project! We're committed to ensuring all new babies born within the AFA

are gifted a handmade — knit, crocheted, or woven — baby blanket! It's just our little way of celebrating each new addition to our folk!

This project has been going strong for nearly a year now, and has been a rousing success! The Ladies of the AFA have knitted, crocheted, and sewn beautiful baby blankets for over 20 of our littlest folk, with more on the way. They've been delivered everywhere from Alaska to Florida, California to Sweden!



If you are a member of the AFA who is expecting a baby, please let your Folkbuilder know so we can get a blanket to you. If you would like to contribute, either financially or by volunteering as a baby blanket crafter, let your Folkbuilder know about that as well, so he can get you in touch with the right people. It's so rewarding to see your handicraft being loved by our little heathens!

Would you like a blanket for your newborn, or to donate and help with yarn costs (yarn is expensive!)? Please email babyblanket@runestone.org today!

Folk Services



For some, it may be a natural disaster. For others an unexpected change in health, and for some just an unforeseen chain of events. Whatever the case may be sometimes we find ourselves in a sticky situation, and although we try and to work and do our best to pull ourselves out, sometimes we may need the help of our Folk community to give us a hand up...

That's when our folks Services Program comes in. We give one-time monetary grants to those members in need. These folks are so grateful and we know that once they get back on track they will contribute to this fund. For those that are able, we are in need of funds so we can be prepared for when these situations arise in our community. If you're able please place a donation today. Even a small donation adds up in the grand scheme of things and even \$5 or \$10 can help if

enough people pitch in. If even a fraction of the folks who like the page did that each month, imagine the possibilities!

AFA Folk Services is intended to provide modest, one-time monetary grants to AFA members in dire need of basic services. It is also to be a source for referrals and information to help members get help beyond what the AFA can directly provide. For more information, please email folkservices@runestone.org.

Your contributions are earnestly solicited and of course, are tax-deductible! Please donate to Folk Services or one of our other AFA Fundraisers at <http://www.runestone.org/donate/>.

Thanks in advance!

Photo Donations

We have a real need for hi-res photographs of our members' gathering, being active in their kindreds, and showing what it means to live Asatru!



If you are willing to donate some hi-res photos for use in promotions such as the AFA Calendar, the AFA website, our publications, and more please email them to the AFA at photos@runestone.org. The larger the resolution the better, so please email them from the device where the photo was taken.

Eir's Blessings

Everybody needs a little extra help sometimes. Women, being the frithy creatures that we are, are uniquely suited to the task of manipulating energy for the purpose of healing. Magic, you could say.

Do you have a health concern and need a little extra energy? Are you battling with a mental illness like depression or PTSD? Is your baby having a hard time with teething? If you've answered yes at all, reach out to us. Once a month women of the



AFA will get together to perform healing rituals all across the globe. If you would like to be included, please send a message to let us know!

At the same time, Women of the AFA! If you are interested in helping to create a frithful, healing magic, let us know! It's easy, but it makes a huge difference to those in our community who need our help!

You can reach us at EirsBlessings@runestone.org

Last Will and Testament

Recently, several members of our AFA family have passed beyond the veil. One was an old man in ill health, two were young men in the prime of life... all died with no legal will on record. Sadly, in two of these cases, our dead AFA members did not have their wishes respected regarding their funerals nor the final resting places of their remains.



We never know when tragedy will strike. We have a responsibility to our loved ones, we have a responsibility to our own legacies, to plan for our passing, and to make our wishes known. Planning for and contemplating our death is uncomfortable. Hopefully, we all have plenty of time for that down the road, but we can't count on that. Maybe we worry about expenses or hiring a lawyer. We all have excuses to put things off until later, unfortunately, sometimes the clock runs out before "later" happens.

We have found an amazing resource for our U.S. members to make legally binding wills in minutes online for **free**. This site also has resources to make Advanced Medical Directives and Powers of Attorney. It takes only **minutes** at <https://www.doyourownwill.com/>.

Please make your will **today**.

The AFA would like to collect signed original copies of wills for all our members and store them. We want to ensure that when members of our AFA family die, their wishes are honored. Please send these to:

Allen Turnage
PO Box 16027
Tallahassee FL, 32317



Witan Allen Turnage
aturnage@runestone.org

AFA Prison Ministry



The importance of this AFA Prison Ministry is so much more than just for those who are actually incarcerated, it benefits not only them as followers of Asatru but their families and loved ones on the outside as they will see the noticeable change in their demeanor and demand that our faith commands for them to lead a noble life. We all are future ancestors and will help them be examples of our faith and not be a burden or a product of recidivism.

We are compiling letters from prisoners that are Educational, Empowering, and Encouraging along with special spiritual writings from our Gothar to create a quarterly newsletter to be distributed to inmates, institutions, and jails. Our mission is not about providing free books or literature to bored prisoners who simply want free stuff. We intend on making real-world change for the better of our folk.

""No packed rooms in the prisons; in each institution I have only a few people; occasionally about a dozen, but 5-6 is more common. I certainly do not want the Fellowship to be a club for cons, or ex-cons; the advantage is that when in prison the inmates have time to discuss and digest what they read, a point that often is lost to people on the outside in the hubbub of daily concerns" - Else Christensen

By the example of our Folkmother, Else Christensen, we will also be going into prisons as we are able to. Some of our Gothar and other leadership, will be going into the prisons to hold study groups, lead blot, and encourage continued growth in the folk inside.

If you have a loved one who is incarcerated or know of someone who is Folkish and will benefit from this ministry, please contact us at prisonministry@runestone.org.



Or if you'd like to donate to this ministry, there's a donation earmark set up on our site [here](#). The donations will be used to get small ritual items and books into the prisons and the hands of our Folk inside.

James Ault
Prison Ministry Director
jault@runestone.org



Cooking for our Folk



Calling all Chefs

We are looking for recipes for a cookbook. We ask that the recipes were served to the folk at a Hof or moot. Please include where and when it was served.

cookbook@runestone.org

Cooking from the Heart. One of the first chefs I worked for told me that there are two main rules to cooking.

1. ALWAYS cook from the heart!
2. You must know the why of the rule before you can think about breaking it.

To this day, I still believe that number one is the most important; but two is the most

valuable lesson. So, for example: why would you add flour to the mix when you are making Fried Potato balls? It doesn't add anything to the dish overall and in fact, it takes away flavor and disrupts texture. The reason is that what flour takes away: is moisture. It adds to the binder and liquid consumption.

So, what does this mean for the folk? Plan and simple, don't take shortcuts. Whenever I pick up the knife and began cooking for the folk, I think of it as channeling the ancestors. Cooking reminds me of that age-old musing "I don't measure seasoning; I wait for the tap on the shoulder from the ancestors to tell me that's enough."

When you cook from the heart, people can tell. Don't cook out of spite or obligation. Cook for the folk because you want to! Find new recipes. Test them. Make them better. And when your heart tells you it is right...time to serve. If you have never made cookies from scratch...make them. Why not? Use the best ingredients you can afford (don't take out a second mortgage for this) but be proud to feed the folk.

When the recipe is right and you feed the folk, please send the recipe to cookbook@runestone.org with details of when and where it was served (Hof/moot).



Folkbuilder Mike Joyner
mjoyner@runestone.org

Ancestral Food and Culture

Rodeo Salad



Rodeo salad is a recipe that my mom made growing up. It's one of my favorites. It's a home-cooked comfort meal. It is also very easy to make and budget-friendly. Also, a meal that your children or family will love.

Ingredients:

- Two cucumbers diced
- One head of lettuce chopped
- Can of black olives
- Package of cherry tomatoes
- A bag of Fritos
- Shredded cheese
- Hamburger meat cooked with taco seasoning
- Can of black beans drained and rinsed
- Catalina dressing

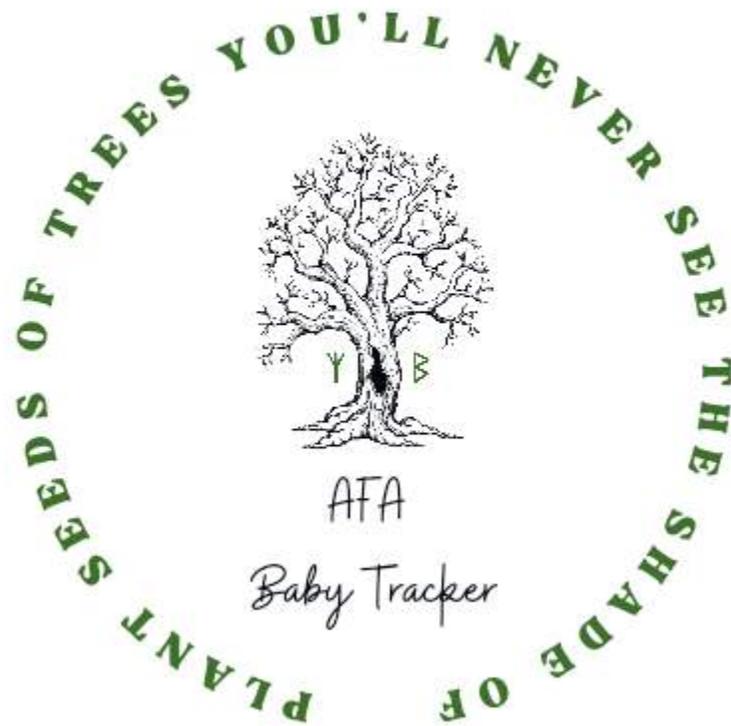
Directions:

Mix it all together and serve



Tabitha Owens
Apprentice Folkbuilder
towens@runestone.org

Baby Tracker

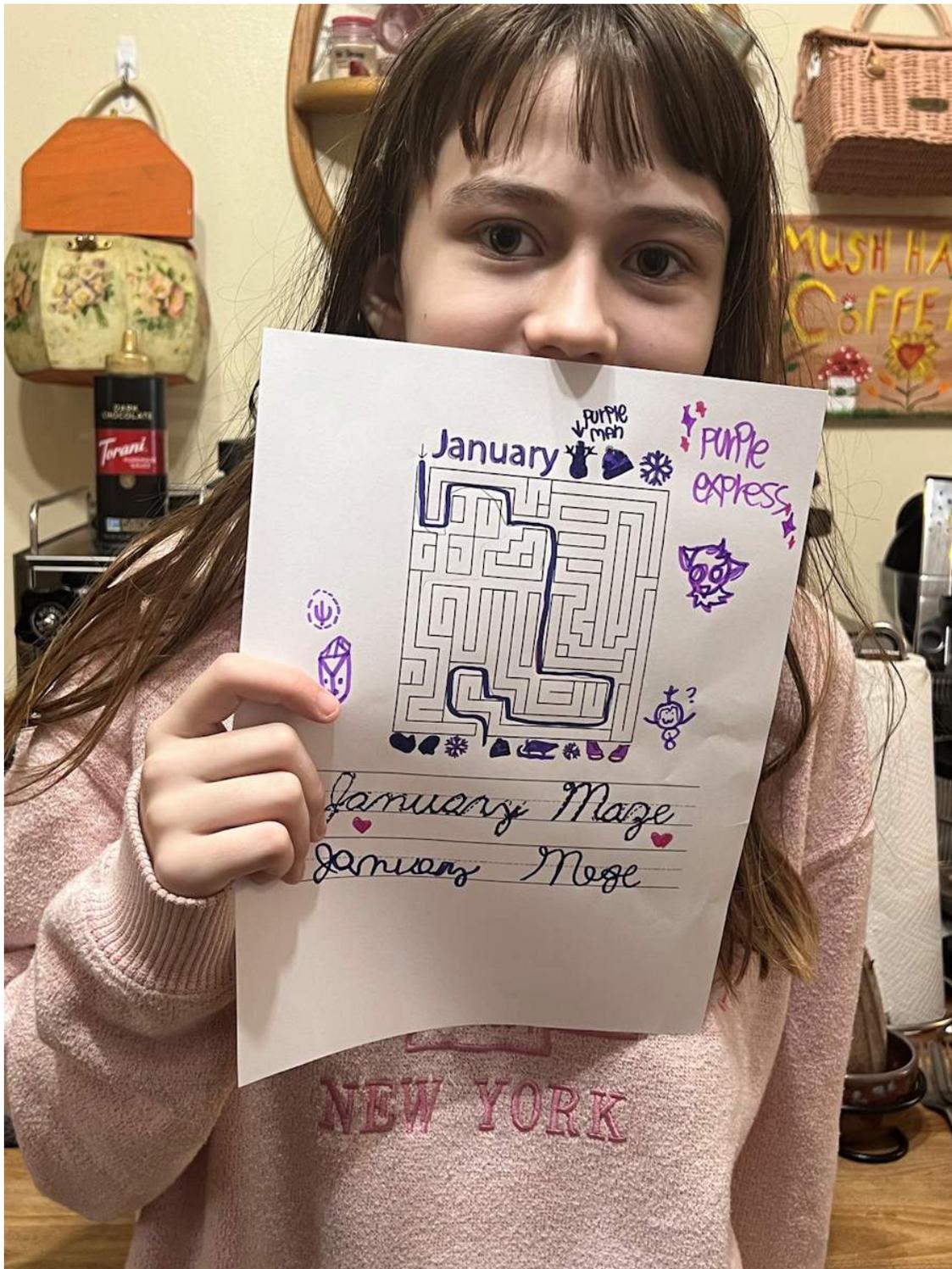


To show the growth of our folk we present to you an ongoing baby tracker. We will be keeping track of how many children have been and are born within the AFA from 2022 and forward. The ongoing tracking is proof that we are building something sustainable for the future of our folk, which is a place for these children to grow up within and a place where they can feel proud of who they are!

Total babies born in 2024: 4

Just for Fun

Kara, age 11, and Russell, age 3, solved January's maze and practiced a little cursive!



These are some beautiful writing samples. I love seeing the original characters and "purple express" drawn by Kara. I'm also delighted to see Russell's shapes recognition (he colored them green).



This month, our young (and young at heart) have another fun maze and opportunity to write their very own acrostic poems using the letters in LOVE. I can't wait to see the creative poems you come up with! Please feel free to use another sheet of paper for your poems if needed, and send them to Press@Runestone.org to share with the Folk!



VIRTUE RECOVERY MEETING

THURSDAY 7PM CST
(5PM PST, 8PM EST)

SATURDAY 9AM CST
(7AM PST, 10AM EST)

Being our most virtuous selves is not always the easiest task. As a community, we are home to many that have or are currently, struggling with addiction. Many traditional 12 step meeting, though so very respected, do not fall in line with what we as a people believe. Specifically, any step pertaining to the divine will or requesting the removal of any shortcomings. So, we run what we are calling the Virtue Recovery Meeting. Since we are an international organization, the best way for us to do this is via Zoom (<http://tinyurl.com/virtuerecoverymeeting>). We hold our meetings every Thursday at 7pm Central and every Saturday at 9am Central. Join us!! Feel free to reach out to

Folkbuilder Ashley McStocker with any and all questions!

AMcStocker@Runestone.org





AFA Reading Challenge Meetings



1/9/24	Link will be posted on MeWe the weekend before the meeting	7/9/24
2/13/24		8/13/24
3/12/24		9/10/24
4/9/24		10/8/24
5/14/24		11/12/24
6/11/24		12/10/24

CONTACT FOLKBUILDER ALI CLAUSEN FOR DETAILS
 ACLAUSEN@RUNESTONE.ORG OR ON MEWE

These meetings are family friendly so please, no politics or overly mature topics

Ladies Book Study

Revolt Against the Modern World

by Julius Evola

Dates:

7 pm CST

January 25th

February 8th

February 22nd

February 29th

March 7th

March 28th

April 4th

April 11th

**Free PDF
and meeting link
in Mewe Ladies Group**

**For more information contact
Witan Brandy Callahan
Folkbuilder Sara Ault**

Ladies Mysteries Podcast

Seidr

Returns in February!

Look for dates, times, and topics posted soon!

Witan Brandy Callahan

Gythia Anna Plourde

Gythia Catie Erickson

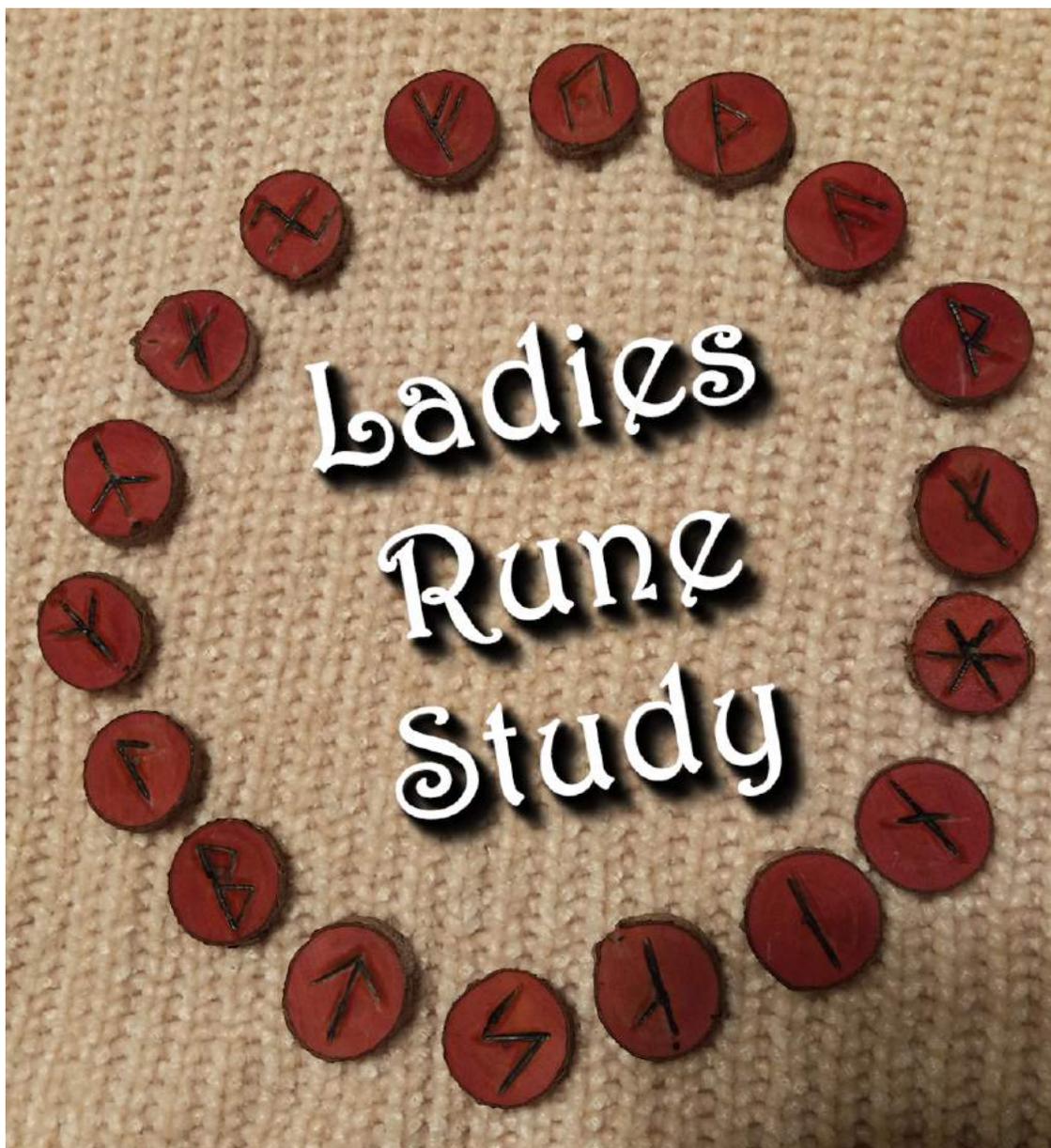
Folkbuilder Heather Young

Folkbuilder Sara Ault

Folkbuilder Ali Clausen

Link will be emailed to all AFA Ladies the week before and posted in the AFA Ladies Group on Mewe

Hope to see you there!



Starting February 3rd, at 1pm Eastern

If you are looking to expand your knowledge of the runes in the company of your AFA sisters, stay tuned. We will be discussing how to work the runes into our real lives, and how they relate to us in the modern world. This is open to all women of the AFA. Stay tuned to the ladies' chat for more details, or feel free to contact Gythia Anna Plourde at aplourde@runestone.org

**Lore Study with
Gothi Jason Plourde**
Join us every Monday night

at

8:00 pm EST

7:00 pm CST

6:00 pm MST

5:00 pm PST

4:00 pm AKST

**Each study begins with trivia questions
from VNS and the previous week's
reading. A winner is announced monthly.**

**The link can be found in the AFA
Spiritual Excellence Group on Mewe.**

**For more information
reach out to Gothi Plourde
jplourde@runestone.org**

Ask to join our MeWe group called AFA Eldri

AFA Eldri Meetings

For our members born before 1975

A place to share memories, ideas, experiences, and the joys of life ~ in caring conversation.

New Dates and Times for 2024

Tuesday nights
5:30 PST, 6:30 MST, 7:30 CST, 8:30 EST

Friday afternoons
2:00 PST, 3:00 MST, 4:00 CST, 5:00 EST

February	March	April
Tuesday: 2/6, 2/20	Tuesday: 3/5, 3/19	Tuesday: 4/9, 4/23
Friday: 2/9, 2/23	Friday: 3/8, 3/22	Friday: 4/12, 4/26

Copy this link into a browser: <https://tinyurl.com/yc289cn8>
Hosted by *Gythia Sheila McNallen*



January Sister's Fitness Winner



The winner of the Sisters Fitness challenge for the month of January is **Apprentice Folkbuilder Hope White** of the Baldrshof district. Hope has shown us her virtues of perseverance and victory by consistently working hard towards achieving her goals. Hope's continued participation in the group has been an inspiration. Congratulations Hope!

All ladies of the AFA are encouraged and welcomed to join in our ladies' fitness support group no matter her starting point. All goals are self-determined, and everyone's goals are different. Come build in frith while working on physical fitness!

— Corrie Proudfoot, member, Minnesota

Genealogy and Kinship Charts

Genealogy enthusiasts!

We have cool things to offer you!

This show what our KINSHIP CHARTS look like when we compare our DNA.

How do you get added?

Get a Gedmatch Kit Number after doing your DNA test. (We can tell you how.)

Send that number to Sheila McNallen: sheila@runestone.org

Also, make a free family tree at familysearch.org. Then login to site: relativefinder.org to find your common ancestors with other members!

JOIN the AFA Genealogy group on MeWe!

McNallen, Sheila	McNallen, Steve	McPhee, Ceilid	Minshall, Mary	Nickerson, Em	Nickerson, Lou	Odden, Thorgr
11.6	7.8	None	None	6.4	13.5	6.5
4.6	None	5	4.1	14.2	9.4	8.6
8.9	None	8.2	9.5	4	5.4	7.5
8.2	18.2	4.9	8.1	9.1	None	6.2
None	None	9.3	9.9	8.2	None	9.6
8.4	9.2	4.4	10.2	None	None	10.9
None	None	None	None	14.4	None	10.5
4.5	None	5.9	20.6	None	11.9	13
6.1	None	None	4.2	4.1	None	None
None	None	None	None	9	None	10.8
26.2	8.3	4.4	4.2	None	None	5.1
None	4.6	18.7	6.9	4.3	7.2	4.3
None	16.3	15.3	None	4.2	10.7	None
None	None	None	None	None	9.8	16.9
None	6.2	12.3	20.4	None	13.2	11.2
11.3	5.5	6	10.3	8.8	None	4.1

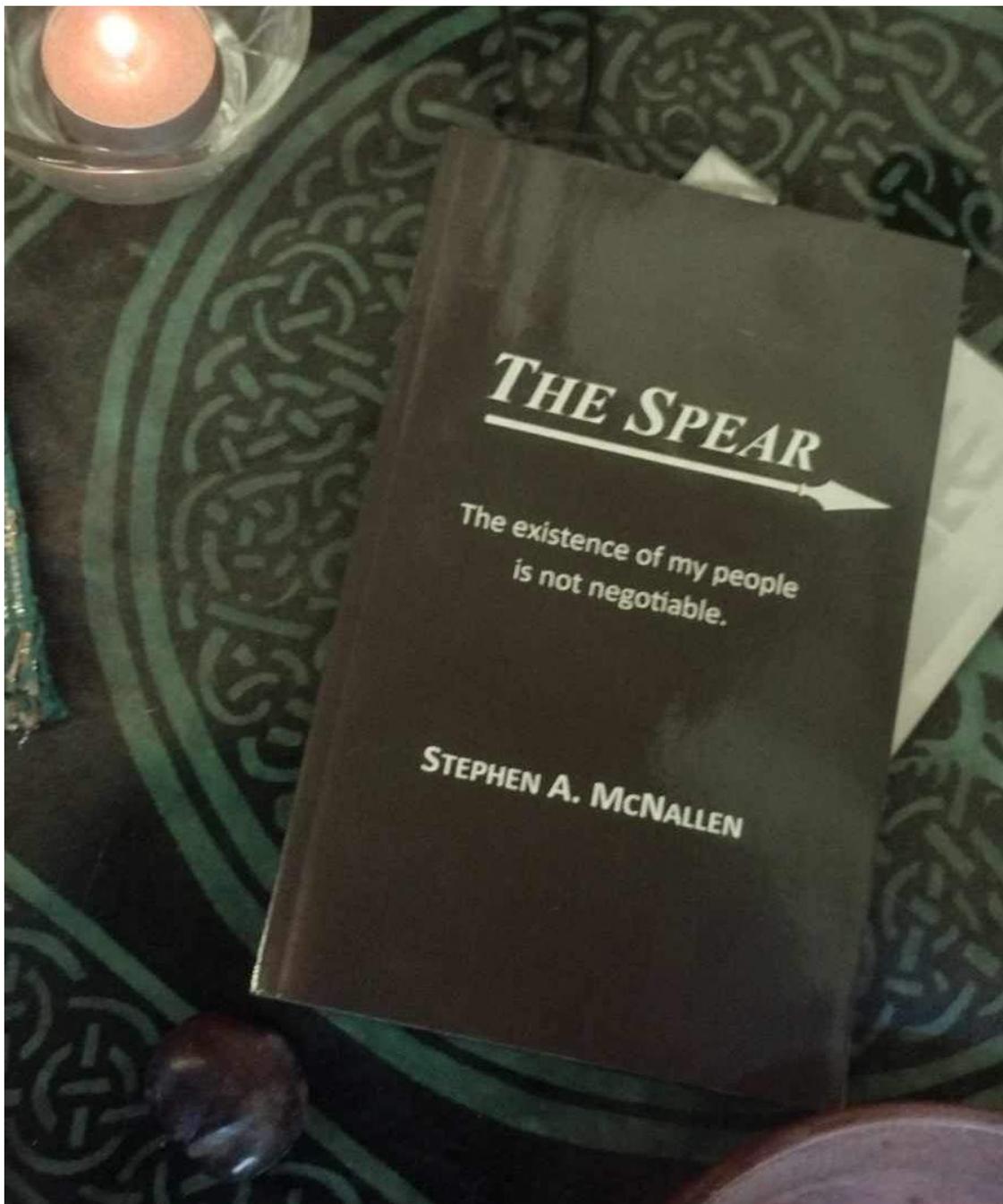


Gythia Sheila McNallen

sheila@runestone.org

Now Available in the AFA Store

Back in Stock



Backed by popular demand, we've got *The Spear* by Stephen McNallen back in stock (if they're not up on the website yet, check back soon, as its very imminent). They sold fast last time, and may not be around for long, so make sure to head on over and get your copy ASAP!

Get over to the [store](#) now!



Folkbuilder Ali Clausen

aclausen@runestone.org

Þórshof

Food Pantry at Þórshof



At Þorrablót this month, our food pantry fed 8 families, with the last bag going to the last car for pick up. No one was turned away.

Hospitality, one of our Noble Virtues, is in full view for all to see.

A special 'thank you' goes to Folkbuilders Ashley McStocker and Heather Young for helping us with our donations.



Folkbuilder Heather Young

hyoung@runestone.org

Þorablót at Þórshof





Þorrablót, our first holiday of the year, happened on Saturday, January 27th, at Þórshof. We started with our usual monthly food pantry, where people were lined up in cars to receive donations. It's great that our community trusts us to extend a helping hand when needed.

After the food drive, Witan Daniel Young talked about Asatru beliefs to some new members. He shared a story about the importance of gifts from friends, showing how meaningful it is to be part of Asatru. This story highlighted the strong bonds between us and the Gods, as well as within our community.

Then, Witan Young led us into the Hof for a Blot honoring Þorr, where we Galdred the Rune Jera. He spoke confidently and passionately, leaving us feeling excited for the year ahead.

After the ceremony, we had some fun outside, competing to see who could throw a rock the farthest. Everyone joined in enthusiastically, including the younger members. One determined girl even promised to practice all year to beat her sister next time.



Folkbuilder Robert Shotwell

rshotwell@runestone.org

Upcoming Events at Þórshof

Þórshof 2024 Calendar

Yule		Þorrablót	
Seast of the Einherjar	Nov. 30th	Dec. 20th-22nd	Jan. 27th
❖ Winter Nights	Oct. 26th		Feb. 24th
Winter Finding	Sep. 28th		Mar. 22nd-24th
Sreyfaxi	Aug. 24th		Apr. 20th
	Jul. 27th	May 25th	Hexennacht
Sigrblót		Jun. 29th	May Day
			Midsummer

❖ Winter Nights - subject to change



Charming
of the Plow
at Þórshof

Feb. 24th
Food Pantry 11a
Festivities 1p



Support Þórshof



The District Poetry Corner

To a Prosperous Charming



To a Prosperous Charming

In the hall of Asgard, where the gods convene,
A celebration stirs, a sacred scene.
Charming of the Plow, a moment revered,
As Freyr descends, his blessings endeared.

Freyr, the god of abundance and might,
With golden grace and the sun's warm light.
As winter's grip yields to the thaw,
He blesses the plow with a gentle awe.

With furrowed brow and hands that toil,
Freyr bestows upon the fertile soil,
A touch divine, a sacred art,
A blessing that echoes from his noble heart.

The plow, a symbol of labor's might,
Turns the earth in the softening light.
Freyr's magic within its iron frame,
Whispers promises of growth and gain.

As the furrows deepen, so do our dreams,
Seeds of purpose sown in life's vast streams.

Charming of the Plow, a call to prepare,
For the goals we seek, for the dreams we dare.

In the soil of our ambitions, we plant the seed,
Nurturing hopes for the life we need.
Freyr's blessings guide our hands,
As we plow through challenges, like fertile lands.

With every turn of the charmed plow,
We cultivate plans, we envision how,
The harvest of our efforts shall unfold,
In the tapestry of the coming year, bold.

As Freyr's blessings grace the earth,
A reminder to assess our worth.
Time to till the soil of our aspirations,
With determination, and bold proclamations.

Charming of the Plow, a sacred rite,
A ritual to welcome the growing light.
Freyr's gift, a catalyst for the year,
As we embark on goals, without fear.

So let the plow break the winter's ground,
Let aspirations and dreams abound.
In Freyr's name, we cultivate with care,
Charming the plow, and laying goals bare.



Folkbuilder Nicholas Rice
nrice@runestone.org

Poem to Gefjon



Poem to Gefjon

See, light making it back
Snow covering all

Yet in houses large and small
The planning for summer has begun

Ideas bright and big
Ambitions and bars set high

“Bring out the tools! Bring them forth”
The families now sing

Hammer, pen, seeds, dreams
Yes, some even bring plows

Oh Lady with oxen so strong
You who King Gylfi gifted land

See our gifts brought forth
Intent and power, poured into horn

We ask you bless our tools

A gift for a gift

Charm our plows, Landchurner!
May we inflict our will.

Hail Gefjon!



Erik Lugnet
Apprentice Folkbuilder
elugnet@runestone.org

Boasting Corner

A Boast to Laura



It is finally here!

The book, 'Barnen ifrån Frostmofjället' by Laura Fitinghoff, has been translated into English by my incredible wife Laura, and is now available wherever you can purchase books online.

It has taken Laura a year from start to finish. Most of that year she was also a mother to two small girls and taking care of the household. Whenever she could find some time, however short it was, she'd dedicate it to bringing this literary gem to new readers, who could not access it before because of the language barrier.

It was surreal to collect the physical book from the mailbox. I cannot imagine how surreal it must be to my wife, even though she has told me. All that work, all the toil and effort. Now here it is, available to anyone able to read English.

Find "The Children of Frostmo Mountain" by Laura Fitinghoff, translated by Laura Lugnet, now wherever books are sold!

Hail Laura Lugnet!



Erik Lugnet
Apprentice Folkbuilder
elugnet@runestone.org

Indiana

The Gift of Thorrablot



Friends and Folk,

As many of you no doubt experienced for yourselves, we “enjoyed” a snap of sub-zero weather here in the Hoosier state, accompanied by snow and ice. Unsurprisingly, this weather put a damper on attendance for our Þorrablót celebration for all of the standard reasons of the season: two for frozen pipes, one for wrecked tire, and so forth and so on. I confess that I was secretly relieved by the cancellations that came pouring in; I

live in a rural area and my driveway can be a long and somewhat arduous journey for those who would dare traverse it in a standard automobile when the plows haven't been out, I worried that many of those who arrived would find themselves stranded here.

However, for those faithful few who braved the elements, there existed an opportunity to appreciate the true fruits of the Þorrablót holiday. The winter is long, and it is cold, it is often dangerous. Þorrablót affords us an opportunity to come together for a reprieve of the winter's trials; to celebrate and feast and make merry with one another in comfort and safety, having braved the tribulations of nature and mundane "frost giants" of our comprehension to honor the One who travails the perils of Jotun-frost and danger as our protector here upon Midgard.

I pondered on this as I trudged back and forth from the woodpile that we had labored in advance to preserve us through the penetrating cold and I found it more poignant than usual that we should celebrate such a holiday, to such a deity, at such a time.

Thor fights and so do we; we fight our enemies, and we fight the cold; this relationship has molded our people, sharpened and drove our propensity for strategic thought and self-reliance.

Þorrablót is fun because it is a time to shelter and feast in the comfort that you have created for yourself and your Folk, but Þorrablót is important because it reiterates to us that it is, in fact a privilege to fight and to raise toast to He who embodies that struggle of our spirit against that which drives against us. I stood outside my home, arms filled with wooden logs, breathing heavily, face, hands and fingers stinging from cold, looking out over a blanket of beautiful but unforgiving frozen death... and I found myself thankful not just for the warmth that I was about to enter, but for the cold which had driven me to create it.

Upcoming Events

Sunday Dinner Pitch-In

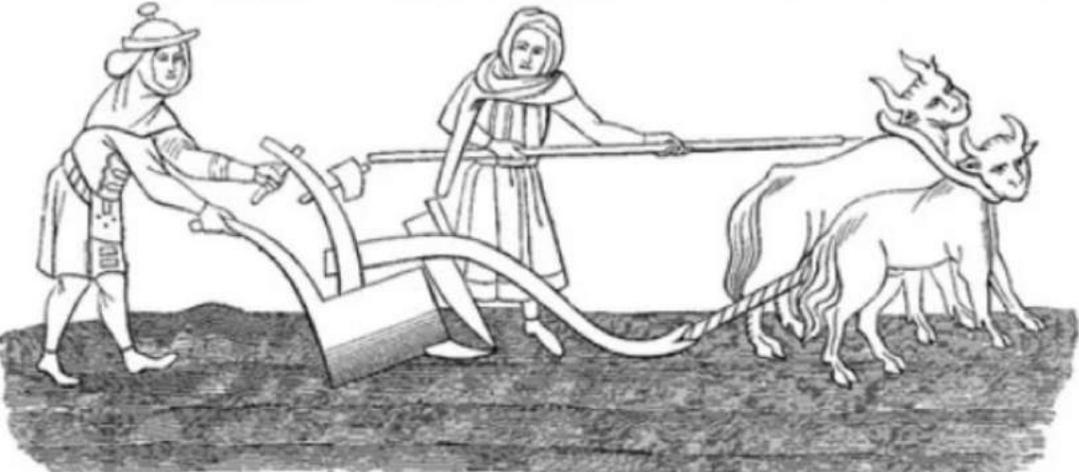


Fortville, IN
Sunday, February 25th @3pm
Jrock@Runestone.org to RSVP

Food • Games • Blót



Charming of the Plow



February 17, 2024
Fortville, IN
JRock@Runestone.org
for details



Folkbuilder Jonathan Rock

jrock@runestone.org



New Hampshire

Folk en Mass



The New Hampshire Folk gathered in Chicopee Mass for a late lunch. We chose a location that was well suited for Folk to come from multiple areas such NY, CT, and, of course, NH. We met some Folk for the first time and shared an amazing German meal together at an authentic German restaurant. Lots of good conversations and great beer from some of Germany's oldest breweries. Thank you to everyone who joined us!

Upcoming Events





Tyler Sagert
Apprentice Folkbuilder
tsagert@runestone.org

New York

Upcoming Events

JOIN US FEBRUARY 23RD
@3PM @ SCHENECTADY NEW
YORK MUSEUM OF SCIENCE
AND INNOVATION



*Fun Planetarium and science
moot!*

RSVP WITH APPRENTICE FOLK
BUILDER DANIELLE RISSO
[@DRISSO@RUNESTONE.ORG](mailto:drisso@runestone.org)



Danielle Riso
Apprentice Folkbuilder
drisso@runestone.org

Upcoming Events



German Restaurant Moot

February, 24 at 3:00 pm

Franklin Square, NY

Contact AFA member Steven Katalenas for details: Phoenix787@protonmail.com

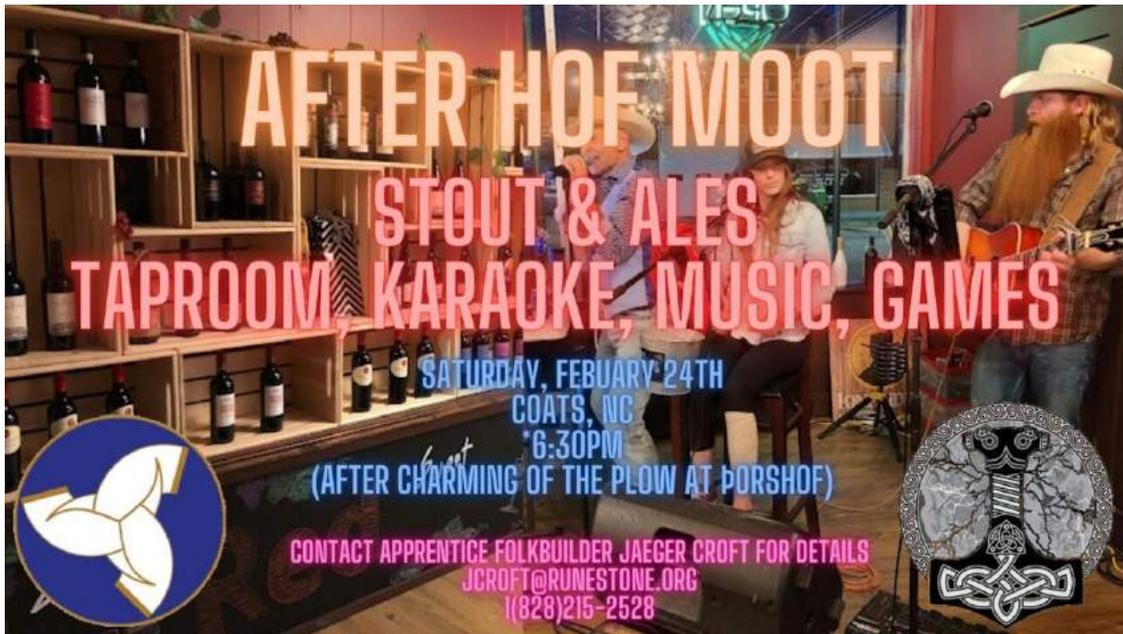
North Carolina

North Carolina Hiking Moot



This month, on the third week of January, I was honored to hold my first official AFA moot at Raven Rock State Park in East North Carolina. We enjoyed fellowship while hiking the trails down to the main river and cliff spot. Upon arriving at the river, we found a good spot to set up a Hörg, with which I lead our group in a humble blot to the Gods and Landvaettir of the land, giving thanks for our time and blessing us with nature. We then hiked back to the entrance, where we exchanged farewells and desires to plan future moots and gatherings. The moot was small but relaxed and good company. I look forward to setting up more moots with the Folk in the coming months. Hail the Gods! Hail the Folk! Hail the AFA!

Upcoming Events



Jaeger Croft
Apprentice Folkbuilder
jcroft@runestone.org

Appalachian Happenings



This month, men from the Njörðshof and Þórshof Districts came together for an adventure on the Appalachian Trail in north Georgia. The conditions were brutal. The weather was some of the coldest I have ever experienced, the trail was the most strenuous in the state, and it seemed as though all the odds were stacked against us. It was a tremendous test of our willpower, stamina, strength, and fortitude. We had a great time and learned a lot; we learned things about ourselves, group dynamics, our gear, and just how much we didn't know. To say it was a humbling experience would be an understatement.

I have done a lot of reflection after this trip. Normally, I would write about the details of the journey for you all to enjoy, but I think I'm going to leave those details to the men who were there. Instead, I'd like to share with you all some of the lessons I learned and try to frame them in a way that applies to the practice of our faith.

We face many challenges in our lives, some mundane and physical, and others that are spiritual. We seem to always have a plan for how we will meet these challenges, but how often do those plans work out? Just how good is your gear? Helmuth von Moltke famously coined the term "no plan survives contact with the enemy," and this has proven to be an absolute truth in my life. We cannot possibly plan for every contingency, but we can definitely condition ourselves to be adaptable. We can train our willpower and hone our critical thinking skills so that we are better able to think on our feet and to craft secondary plans on the fly.

Many of us who have come to Asatru seem to have this attitude of rejecting anything that resembles what we deem to be too Christian. Whether this is kneeling before the Gods or daily prayer, it is a challenge to change our way of thinking on this. One practice that doesn't get enough attention is praying when things get hard. I don't mean prayer in an Abrahamic context; we're not praying for deliverance or for some all-powerful sky daddy to come down and fix our problems for us, but rather for the Gods to help us find the strength within ourselves that they have given us, and to empower us to help ourselves. We have been given incredible gifts by our Gods and it is a shame to squander them. Another feature of prayer that is often overlooked is praying to our ancestors. Nobody else has more invested in our success and wellbeing than our ancestors! Think about your children and grandchildren: what would you not give them to help them succeed and to overcome the trials that they face? A quick prayer to your ancestors can help you more than you know and will see you through many difficulties.

The final lesson I will leave you with is leaning on your Folk. Self-Reliance is a virtue, yes, but it's also virtuous to lean on your brothers and sisters. We as individuals do not

have all the answers, but I guarantee you that one of your Folk can help you through what you're having difficulty with. I'm not mechanically inclined, but I have brothers I can call with mechanical issues. You may not know what sleeping system or boots you need for a hike, or how far apart you should place the studs in your wall, but I'm always available to help you. Spiritually, we can all lean on our Gothar who literally have lifetimes of experience between them that can help you. None of us are going through this alone, and we function better as a community than we do as isolated individuals. We share a group Hamingja, and our kin fence is strong. Lean on each other! Pride is a fine and noble thing, but you should never feel "less than" for reaching out to or leaning on the Folk around you.

I hope the winter blues aren't getting to you too bad, and I eagerly look forward to seeing you at an event soon. Summer will be upon us before we know it, and we'll bask in the warmth of the sun and each other's company once again. Hail the Folk!

Upcoming Events



MARCH 16

Join us at the
Bethea house in
Hendersonville, NC

Bring a dish, stay for
bonfire and games!

**WILD GAME
SUPPER**

Arrival at 2, Dinner at 5

Bring your favorite wild game dish

Contact Folkbuilder Tyler Bethea for details
tbethea@runestone.org (828) 707-7851

Ostara at Thorshof is coming up very soon, and my family is so excited about it. This year marks the 10th anniversary of my wife and I being married, and we have decided to renew our vows to each other at Ostara. When we got married, we had a very small and private ceremony at the county courthouse. This was also before we started our Asatru journey, so there was no religiosity involved at all. We want to take vows before our Gods and our Folk and would love for you to be a part of that as well. I hope you'll

all join us for this very special occasion at the tail end of a wonderful weekend at the best national event the AFA puts on.



Folkbuilder Tyler Bethea

tbethea@runestone.org

Ohio

Persistence



Nothing in life of worth comes easily. Regardless of the goal, any objective is accomplished through diligent steps taken over time. In today's fast paced world, instant gratification is a prevalent expectation. This is not congruent with the course of nature and, in my belief, a properly lived life. What we are doing, here in the AFA, is a true revitalization of our connection to our Gods, and a return to a sane and noble way of life. Through time, and countless points of energy, and effort, we will have a Hof on every corner we travel by. We will have built upon the vision Stephen McNallen laid out quite some time ago. It's already grown so much, and we are all on the threshold of

growth unimagined if we all put forth our own individual points of effort, and love. Every meal made, every well wish, and every ear to bend is a wonderful contribution to the mosaic that has been created here. Not only in the AFA, but in the world at large. We are the noble people and have a chance to take this creation and proudly hand it to the next generation with all of our additions to it and hope for a brighter future with each of those succeeding us. You are all important and have my admiration and respect. Let us all create a proud and honorable legacy for those after us. Persistence built all that surrounds us today. Let us maintain and further it's glory. Hail the Gods, Hail the Folk, and Hail the AFA.



Folkbuilder Joe Drotos

jdrotos@runestone.org

Pennsylvania

Upcoming Events

PA Charming of the Plow

Join us at Canoe Creek State Park, in Hollidaysburg, PA for an afternoon hiking, exploring abandoned lime kilns, and Blot!

FEBRUARY
17TH
AT 130PM.

Contact Gythia Catie Erickson for details:

717-893-9682

cm.erickson@runestone.org



Gythia Catie Erickson

cm.erickson@runestone.org

Central PA Þorrablót

For Þorrablót, Folk from Pennsylvania, Maryland, West Virginia, and New York gathered at a cozy and friendly diner in south-central Pennsylvania. We enjoyed each other's company, good food, and watched the kids run a bit wild, but not so wild as to knock down any waitresses. We had varied conversations including but not limited to courting methods, buttercakes, sourdough starters, changing demographics of places we love, the Asatru view on scientific advancements, and the Asatru view on the coercive authority of states both legitimate and illegitimate. Yikes!

We held a casual but respectful Sumbel in the dining room in full view of the other diner patrons, who hopefully saw something interesting in our party. We trust that Asa Þorr saw us and heard our toasts, and hope that our Folk did too.

Hail Þorr!

Witan Clifford Erickson
cerickson@runestone.org



Poland

A Scottish Fire Night



As part of the frosty Winters tradition would have us gathered around the hearths and fireplaces of our homes to hear the stories of yore and our forebears. Nights such as these were we there to take part in mead drinking and feasting but also to hear poetry and music from talented friends. And there we were one evening that, despite the wind and rain, 10 strangers and friends took part in our Moot as we joined this Scottish Fire

Night at the Jomsborg Fortress. Much merriment was had during the feast of traditional haggis and drinks of spirits.





When the evening calmed, a lesson on alter preparation and appearance was given as well as how to make a ceremony and prayer in one's own home to the Gods. The evening was the finished with some hot spiced beer and all parted ways now the wiser.

Hail the Gods!

Hail the Ancestors!

Hail the AFA!

Upcoming Events



Aspir Befreier
Apprentice Folkbuilder
abefreier@runestone.org

Sweden

Blot to Thor and a bit on Piety



Our first blot this year was an incredible time, and a great start to the new year.

We have recently taken up going to the sauna before having blot. A sort of cleansing ritual. Our sauna is its own separate building with a wood stove. As it has no electricity, we sit in dim candlelight. It is hot, dark and quiet. It lends itself to reflection and entering a more receptive state of mind. As it is winter, we also need to have the fire going for at least a few hours before it is warm enough to bathe in. Thus, during winter, it allows me, the one keeping the fire going, to add more to the coming sacrifice after sauna, that is, my toil and time.

This winter night was actually a pretty warm one. Hovering above freezing, with incredibly strong violent winds. It felt fitting as to whom we were going to gift to.

In fact, the winds were so severe that having candles lit, as we usually have, was a no-go. They were snuffed out immediately. We'd have to rely on a big fire on the ground.



At first, the fire was grand, but the blowing of the wind more or less killed it just as we were going to have our blot. I spent a long time blowing on the embers, but it seemed futile. At that point, I could have simply said ‘this is not going to work, we’ll have to perform blot in the dark instead.’

I wasn’t going to let that be the case. “Thor is going to have a great big fire if it is the last thing I do!” I said out loud. I walked back to our woodshed and brought out more wood, more kindling, my arms full.

As I made my way back to the ritual space, I could see light! Apparently not long after I left to fetch more wood, the fire had come back to life and was roaring in tune with the mighty wind. After I added more of the firewood, the flames rose even higher.

It was, I think, a fantastic blot. We asked Lord Thor to help us in 2024 to find our inner strength and courage, so that we may do what is right and not fear the consequences of that doing.



Despite the fact that I was greatly discouraged when the fire first died, I decided to not stop trying. We were going to have a fire in honor of Thor. Because we want to be pious.

Piety is not giving up. Piety is showing up and doing the right thing. We all know deep down what the right thing is. It doesn't need to be perfect. But it should be done. Worship your Gods through the gift cycle. Hail your ancestors. And work for a more Noble tomorrow for your children.

Hail Thor! Hail the Folk! Hail the AFA!

Upcoming Events



Fika Friday

16th of February

22th of March

26th of April

Come and have a warm cup of coffee with the Lugnets!



Charming of the Plow

17th of February

Join us in northern Sweden as we celebrate Charming of the Plow!

RSVP elugnet@runestone.org



Ostara

23th of March

Come and let us celebrate the Lady of Spring!



Hexennacht

27th of April

Come and let us share joy and Frith for the coming of Spring!



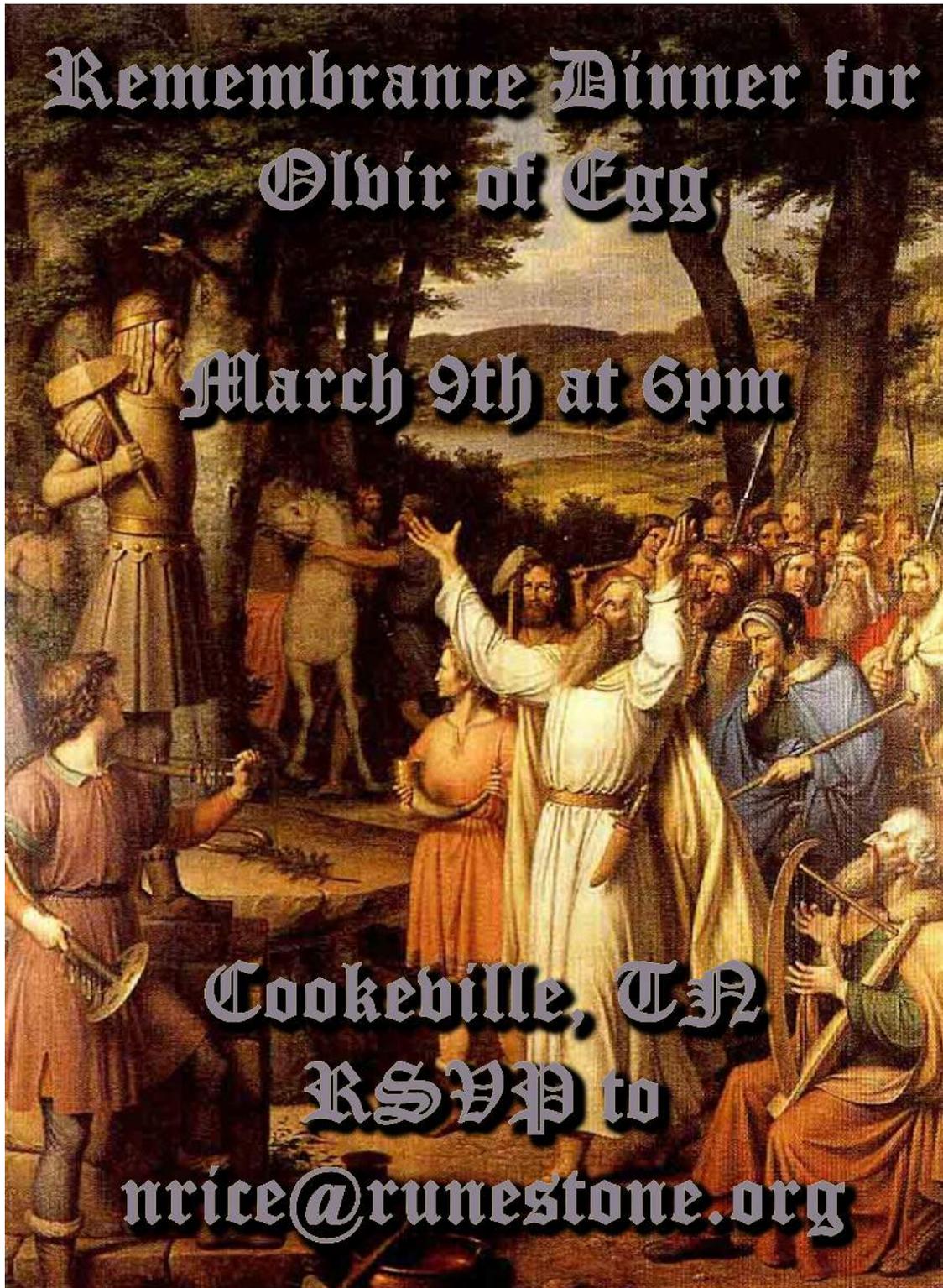
Erik Lugnet
Apprentice Folkbuilder
elugnet@runestone.org

Tennessee

Upcoming Events







Remembrance Dinner for Olvir of Egg

March 9th at 6pm

Cookeville, TN

RSVP to

nrice@runestone.org

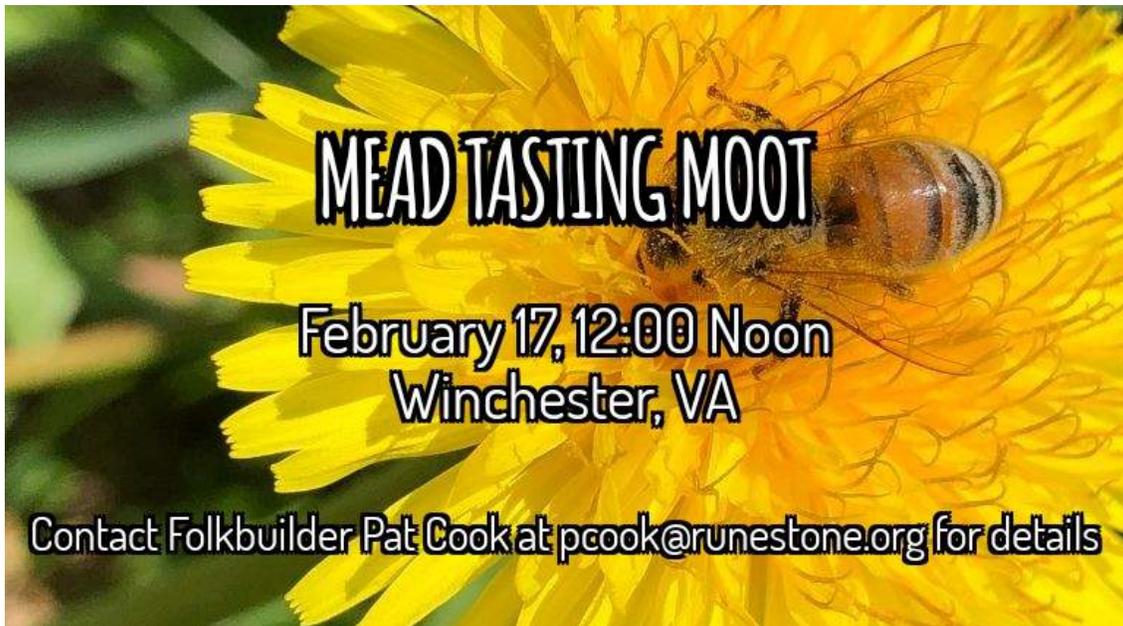
Folkbuilder Nicholas Rice

nrice@runestone.org



West Virginia

Upcoming Events



Folkbuilder Patrick Cook

pcook@runestone.org



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